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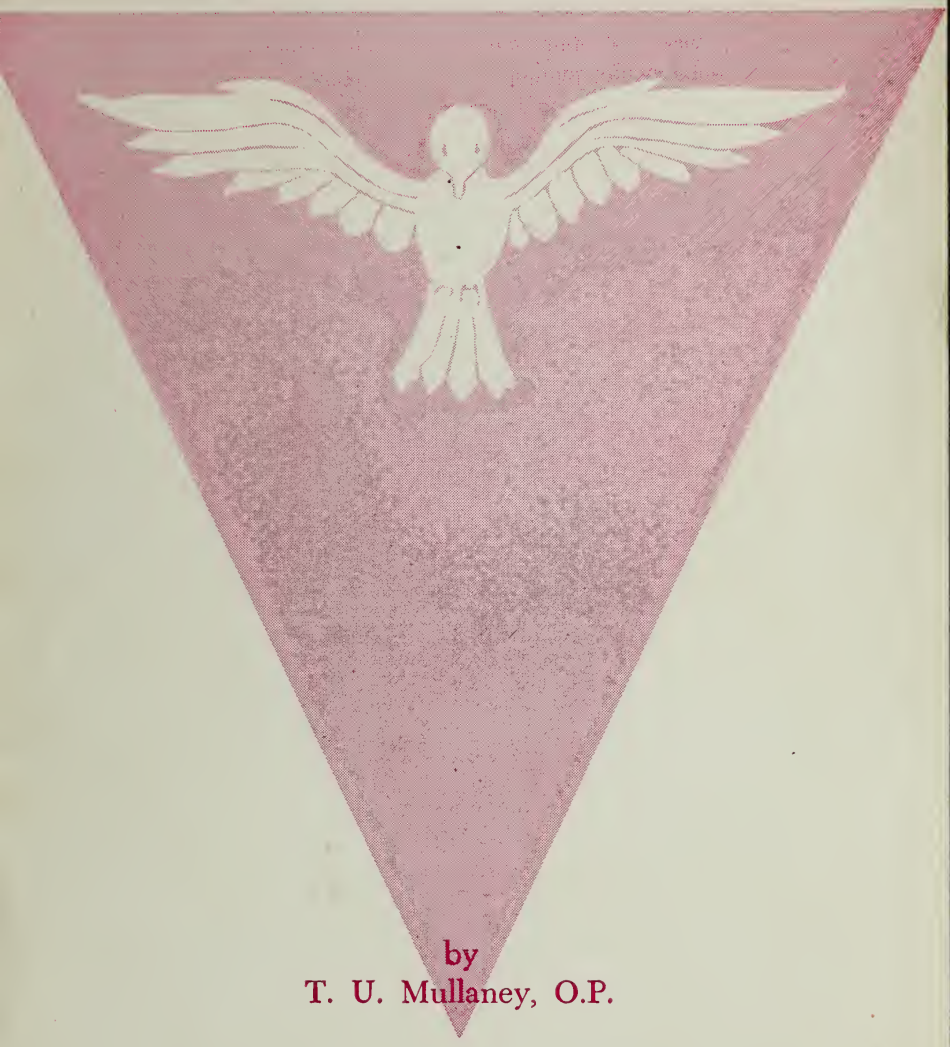
the meaning of the divine indwelling



by
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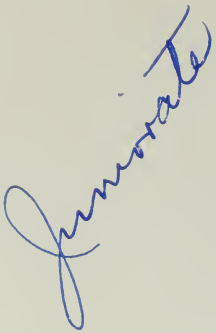
A CROSS AND CROWN REPRINT



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The Meaning of the Divine Indwelling

I WISH to write about a mystery of the faith which is at once profound, moving, yet most practical. May I begin by stating that mystery in words borrowed from the greatest of theologians?

> There is one general way in which God is in everything. . . . Beyond this . . . is a special way, reserved to rational nature, by which God is said to be present as that which is known is present to the knower, and that which is loved is present to him who loves. And because a rational creature by his activity in knowing and loving is placed in contact with God Himself, it is said not only that God is *in* the rational creature but that He *dwells* in him, as in His temple. No effect other than sanctifying grace can be the reason for this new presence of the divine Person. . . . In the giving of sanctifying grace . . . the Holy Ghost Himself is given and is sent [into the soul].[1]

The following are, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the elements of this supernatural mystery: 1) In the souls of good men the living God abides not merely in the sense in which He is rightly said to be everywhere, but in an altogether special way. 2) This special presence of God is described as His abiding in a temple, consecrated

to Him; again, it is described as a presence or union whereby men intimately know, deeply love, and truly possess God Himself. 3) Only sanctifying grace achieves this special indwelling of God. 4) The indwelling is something over and above grace, for, says St. Thomas, "one receives *also* the Holy Ghost Himself."

The Message Given by Revelation

Upon what foundation does this theological teaching rest? We must look at once to God's revelation—found in the Bible and in Divine Tradition within the Church—to judge whether this doctrine of God's inhabiting men's souls is verified in that revelation.

Very familiar is the text of the inspired St. Paul: "You are the *temple of God,* and the spirit of God *dwelleth in you*" (1 Cor. 3:16). In simplest terms this states the doctrine in question: True God dwells, or habitually resides, within the Christian soul. Conversely, the Christian really carries within himself the one true God.

More than this, other places in Sacred Scripture teach that each distinct Person of the divine Trinity lives in the Christian soul. This we know on the authority of Christ Himself. Relative to the divine Father, Christ promised, "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word and My Father will love him and We will *come to him* and *make Our abode with him*" (John 14:23). Of Himself the Lord said, "I will not leave you orphans; I will *come to you* (John 14:18). . . . *Abide* in me and *I in you*" (John 15:4). Even more fully, He spoke of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. "I will ask the Father and He shall *give* you another Paraclete that He may *abide* with you forever. The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him: because He shall *abide* in you, and shall be in you (John 14:16 f.). . . . The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you

(John 14:26). . . . When He, the spirit of truth is *come,* He will teach you all truth. For He will not speak of Himself: but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak" (John 16:13). And again it is St. Paul who sums up the doctrine, "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is *given* to us" (Rom. 5:5).

Unmistakably, God's revelation does teach these points: 1) God Himself does *come* to us to *dwell* or *abide* within us; 2) this is true of each Person of the blessed Trinity. If we more often hear of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, this is not to be understood of that divine Person in an exclusive sense, but of all three Persons of the Godhead, as the Lord himself taught.[2] 3) The divine indwelling involves our knowing the divine Persons in a way impossible to those who are not God's friends; it involves our learning from God, our being taught by Him; it involves especially our love, for Christ clearly said, "If any man love Me . . . We [i.e., the Father and His Son] will come to him and make Our abode with him."

These are revealed truths, as stated.

I must add this point. God's inhabiting the soul means more than the fact that grace is in the soul; it means that the substantial reality of the divine Trinity is substantially present to the soul.

This point seems to be rooted, also, in divine revelation. St. Paul, for example, clearly distinguishes between the created gift (charity) in the soul, and the uncreated Giver, saying that both are present. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." The giving of both is real, but not identical; the Holy Ghost, source of created charity, is given to us in addition to the charity; and the Holy Ghost is substantial God.

Again, quite evidently, the Spirit whom Christ promised to His apostles is a person, a divine Person, not merely created grace. Christ's very term, Paraclete, has a decidedly personal signification. It designates one who is an advocate, an interceder, a teacher, or comforter, whereas sancti-

fying grace, a condition of soul, is in no sense a person and can neither intercede for us nor be as one who strengthens and comforts us. Further, created grace does not hear nor speak nor teach: yet the Lord promised a Spirit who would teach the apostles all truth, and who would speak to them all things that Spirit had heard. This only a Person, a divine Person of infinite truth, could do.

The Facts Related by the Fathers

The Fathers of the Church, those great witnesses to the Church's living tradition of revealed truth, give evidence of clear awareness that the doctrine of the divine indwelling means that the substantial reality of God is present to the soul.

Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch calls his flock not merely grace-bearers, but "God-bearers."[3] St. Irenaeus wrote that the baptized "receive the Spirit of God" and that they do not remain holy "unless the Holy Spirit abide with them in strict conjunction. The Spirit . . . abides in him who receives Him so long as he lives in truth and sanctity."[4] Therefore in St. Irenaeus' thought the created sanctity is not the presence of the Holy Spirit: the latter is, by far, the greater gift. St. Clement of Alexandria and Origen say that the divine Persons dwell in and fill the just soul. St. Athanasius is no less clear. St. Basil teaches that "souls who bear the Spirit and are illumined by the Spirit become spiritual themselves and send forth grace to others."[5] His successor, Didymus wrote "It is the proper substance of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the just. . . . It belongs only to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity to be able, by their substance, to penetrate into souls."[6] St. Cyril of Alexandria is vehement on this point: "If, signed by the Holy Ghost, we are made conformable to God, how can that by which the image of the divine essence and the signs of uncreated nature are imprinted on us—how can that be created? . . . In the hearts of those who receive Him . . . He depicts His nature both by communication of Himself and by his likeness."[7]

In the Western Church, St. Hilary and St. Ambrose teach that true God Himself is with us. Not surprisingly the incomparable St. Augustine succinctly sums up the basic elements of the traditional doctrine. "While God is everywhere entire, nevertheless He does not dwell in all things. . . . He is everywhere by the presence of divinity, but He is not everywhere by the grace of inhabitation. . . . [A divine Person is given or sent] at the very time He is known and perceived by someone."[8]

To sum up: That God dwells in a special, if mysterious, way (a way that involves *knowing* God) in the souls of just men is a divinely revealed truth. That God's indwelling implies the real and substantial presence of the divine Persons themselves is taught by many great Fathers of the Church and by the great majority of Catholic theologians.

Two questions remain before us: 1) How shall we understand the way in which this substantial presence of God is brought about? 2) What does the doctrine of divine inhabitation mean for our day by day living—what practical difference does the doctrine make?

How God's Presence is Brought About

Underlying the answer to our first question is the general truth, certain by faith, that God truly is everywhere. This universal presence of God must not be imagined as a sort of stretching out of the divine substance. Some material things, we know, as they become more expanded, extend over a greater area. God however is neither material, nor extended, nor expandable. How then is He everywhere?

He is everywhere by His activity, by His causation of things. So perfect is God, so completely one, that He is one with His own activity; where God acts, there God is, for His act is God. Now deep within every created thing God acts. For no creature is its own existence, its own being. Were a creature really its own being or existence

that creature would be eternal, changeless, indestructible, whereas, everything we encounter has beginning and end and changeability. At every moment, therefore, existence is being bestowed upon every created reality, bestowed by Him alone whose very nature is fullness of existence. *He who is* is the name of God; it is God's identification of Himself, *I am who am* (Exod. 3:14). Whatever else is, is, not by reason of anything intrinsic to its nature, but solely by the existence God gives it at every instant. St. Thomas writes:

> God is directly, by Himself, the cause of existing. He communicates existence to all as the sun communicates light to the air. . . . The continuous shining of the sun is required for the preservation of light in the air; similarly God must unceasingly confer existence on things if they are to continue in existence. . . . Hence necessarily God is present to all things to the extent that they have existence. But existence is that which is most intimately present in all things. Therefore God must be *in* all things.[9]

It was realization of the truth that God is present everywhere at the innermost depths of reality that led the Psalmist to cry out, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy face? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I descend into hell thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 138:7-10). And in the less poetic, but more familiar, words of St. Paul, "In Him we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28).

God then, as cause of all things, is present to all things. For His causality is Himself; and it is also a continuing causality without which nothing can survive for one moment. Wherever reality is, there is God giving it reality.

Now God's special and thoroughly supernatural abiding within the Christian soul means that the soul is in a vital and personal way made supernaturally aware of the triune God who is in any case always there. The soul comes, so

to say, to experience, to feel the God it cannot escape. The soul comes to know and to love God within it, as God knows and loves Himself.

What gives this supernatural awareness, this divine sensitiveness, this wordless experience of God? Remember God is in the soul from the beginning, giving to it life, being, activity. What is necessary then is that the soul be awakened to divine life through divine powers of awareness to know God, divine powers of love to become immersed in Him, and these powers God gives to every Christian soul. The awakening to divine life, the divinization of the soul's own substance, is sanctifying grace. The divine power of awareness to know God is faith and wisdom. The divine power to love is created charity.

Faith and Charity in General

Consider for a moment particularly the function of divine faith and charity in Christian life.

By supernatural faith we do not give assent to just any truth whatsoever; no, by faith we believe *all* revealed truth about God, and *only* the truth about God that God Himself has revealed. *That which* we believe is God's revelation; the *reason why* we believe is God's truthfulness in revealing. Both *what* we believe, and *why* we believe are divine, God manifesting Himself to mankind.[10] By faith then we, as it were, touch God; faith's whole function is to conjoin us, in vital awareness, to the truth that God is. By faith man's mind is indeed made ready to know God, so that St. Augustine could say, "He who believes in Christ, touches Christ," for, by faith, the truth of God and the God of all truth are joined to the mind of man as the object and motive of the mind's assent.

Divine love—charity—involves another vital union with God, the union of the now divinized powers of affection. The act of charity is, so to say, the soul's loving embrace of the Blessed Trinity. For *that which* is loved by charity

is not any and all goodness, but precisely the infinity of beauty and of goodness that is God; and *that on account of which* one loves God by charity is not one's own advantage but simply the ravishing delight of God's goodness.[11] Here is an immediate conjunction—by divine love the soul is drawn out of itself to exult in God's infinite beauty substantially present to the soul's being.

As in heaven the light of glory interiorly alters and raises up the mind so that the mind can know the essence of God, the Trinity in itself, so in this life (though much less perfectly), faith readies man's mind to touch and embrace the truth of God. And, as in heaven, beatific love equips the soul to immerse itself in the embracing goodness of God so on this earth charity achieves that same effect.

Thus, following orthodox theological tradition, we are sure that divine faith and supernatural love are involved in God's inhabitation of the soul. Faith and charity are not that inhabitation, they are not God's own presence, for however supernatural they are they remain created qualities, not the divine Persons themselves. Yet by the activity of these virtues God is somehow made present, in truly supernatural fashion, to the soul; for these virtues both come from God as supernatural effects of His supernatural presence and activity and render us vitally aware of, and responsive to, that divine presence. They are man's vitalization toward God, not now as a hidden cause of natural effects, but as my most intimate, most beloved friend, whom I know by faith and embrace by charity.

Yet one pauses. Is such an explanation accurate and sufficient? For it seems certain that in this life even with divine faith we cannot have direct, or immediate experience of God. Such experience *is* beatific vision, heaven's life. On this earth all supernatural activity begins in faith, not vision, and faith by its own laws seems to render impossible any "experience" of God in Himself. The reason is that an act of faith—the Creed—expresses in human

words and sentences the divine truths we believe. Those words and sentences stand for, symbolize the truth they express but they are not that truth itself, they are not the living God, somewhat as an author's printed, visible words express and symbolize his invisible, living thought yet themselves are not that thought. The finite, human words of the Creed are measurelessly deficient in expressing infinite, divine truth; yet they are the only words that we have![12]

It follows—and Christian experience testifies—that there is always about faith a dissatisfaction, a restlessness, an incompleteness and obscurity. Whatever we can conceive and express about God, even in faith, is infinitely less than God. So while the Creed of our faith is a necessary medium of our approach to God (necessary because we cannot now grasp the Word who is God, the one Word adequately expressive of divine truth) it is a medium which veils divine truth in the very process of proclaiming it. "I see now in a dark manner."

In this life all growth in God is rooted in faith. Since faith attains God not directly in Himself but through obscure, inadequate media, it would seem to follow that at no stage of our supernatural development on earth can we really "experience" or "feel" God in Himself. How, then, can the doctrine of divine indwelling mean, as theologians say it does mean, that through faith and love the sanctified soul comes to experience, to feel the divine Persons of the Trinity, and this in their sacred distinctness?[13]

Concrete human experience suggests the answer to this question. Suppose that you meet, after years of separation, a friend whom you love deeply and who loves you. Meeting him, what would you experience? His firm handclasp; his steady, joyful gaze upon you; love's words of greeting, warmly uttered. Would you experience, or feel, his love for you? In a real sense you would, for love and

joy would be mutually communicated between you and him.

Yet, love, even human love, is a hidden, inner thing, a human attitude deep within a person's will. Living within the spirit of man it cannot of itself be seen, or heard, or felt, in bodily fashion. The firm handclasp, the gladdened glance, the vibrant words, these are not the inner love, but mere bodily activities, love's outer symbols, or manifestations. But they do unmistakably reveal the inner reality which they outwardly express.

Again, and still in the realm of concrete human experience, as you listen to someone speak do you come to know, to experience, his human thought? In its vehicle of communication, yes; for words have no function or meaning save as expressions of thought. Yet, of itself, thought is (like love) a thing secret, hidden in the spirit of a man, having neither sound to be heard nor any other sense—quality really revelatory of its content. Still we can, and do know, experience our neighbors' thoughts in so far as they are made manifest to us in the outer symbols which are words.

From the examples emerges this truth: something very real may, of itself, be supra-sensible, therefore hidden, yet revealable among men in such sense-perceptible symbols as words, signs, actions, laws, books, sacraments—a whole universe of outer realities manifestive of inner and yet more profound reality.

Apply this now to the question of the divine Persons as inhabiting the human soul. As human love and human thought are very real, yet in themselves hidden, so is this presence of God real yet hidden. It is real—as we have seen—in the sense that it is both substantial and supernatural; God's activity in producing and preserving the soul's supernatural life *is* the very substance of God, as He is the author of the supernatural realm. This presence is, even to faith, hidden, because—as we have also seen—in this life "no man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

But is this also true, that as human love and thought, however hidden, have certain perfect symbols through which they are felt, and communicated, so also the Persons who are God-within-my-soul have proper symbols through which they too, however hidden, are sensed, experienced, and felt?

This is precisely the case. Therefore, divine indwelling means that we do experience and contact the substantial Persons who are the living God as truly as we experience the love of others for us, as truly as we encounter, and come to know, the opinions and thoughts of human persons about us.

What are the symbols, the created manifestations in which and through which we can know, touch, experience the Persons divinely dwelling within us? What is required are manifestations which, although created, really represent the divine Persons, precisely as they are distinct each from the others; short of that the distinct identity of each Person of the Godhead would not be truly symbolized, nor therefore, given and communicated to the soul through that symbol, somewhat as inept, or imprecise language cannot communicate the precise reality of human thought. But the fact is that God does bestow upon the sanctified soul supernatural, created realities symbolic of the divine Persons, in and through which those very Persons are communicated to that soul.

Of the divine Son, second Person of the Trinity, this is distinctive, namely, that He comes forth from the Father not in any way whatsoever, but—as Scripture infallibly teaches us—as the Word. He is the Word of divine wisdom, the term expressive of divine knowledge. God the Father is He who utters, or speaks; God the Son is the Word divinely uttered.

In the soul of every just man, God, already present, effects a certain created wisdom, a special and supreme gift of God's love (which significantly is always placed

first in enumerating the seven gifts of God). This gift of wisdom, a created thing, is not the living Word of wisdom, the Word that is God, somewhat as the word spoken by a man is not the living thought within that man's mind. But as the speaker's word manifests, communicates his thought, so does created, supernatural wisdom manifest the divine Word of wisdom in His distinctness[14]—for it is precisely and only as wisdom's Word that He is distinct from the Father and the Spirit.

Again of the divine Spirit, third Person of the Trinity, this is distinctive, namely, that He comes forth, as from one principle or source, from the Father and the Son not in any way whatsoever but—and this His very name indicates—as the impulse, the Spirit, the breath of love, the term of infinite loving.

Proportionately, into every just man the living God breathes the virtue of divine love, called charity. This love is a created thing, not the uncreated Spirit of Love, somewhat as a man's act of embracing his friend is not the same thing as the love hidden in his will. Nevertheless as the embrace manifests and communicates the love so does created, supernatural charity manifest Him who is divine love—and communicates Him in His distinctness, for it is precisely and only as term of love that the divine Spirit is distinct from both the Father and the Son.

This account is not at all equivalent to the position, held by a few medieval theologians, that the indwelling of the Trinity means only the presence to the soul of created representations of the divine Persons. In this opinion the Persons could be said to be present because represented in the soul, in somewhat the same way that we might say of a photograph, "That is so-and-so." Such a position would, at least by implication, deny the substantial reality of divine inhabitation, and reduce it to an exclusively representational, or intentional, manner of presence.

St. Thomas' account both begins and ends with the fact that the true *substance* of the Godhead is, in any case, already inescapably within us, since God *is* His activity of causing; and God's causality is within the soul. Moreover God is *supernaturally* present, because His effects of grace and gifts and virtues are specifically supernatural. This is the objective basis which renders possible "touching" the eternal God. Man's subjective capacity to "touch" God Himself infuses into the soul—in the enlightening word of wisdom and in love's soaring impulse. These manifest the personal identity of distinct divine Persons.[15]

For both theoretical and practical reasons special stress should be put upon the role of created charity in the mystery of divine indwelling. The theoretical reason is that charity is absolutely required in the soul not alone in order that the Spirit of love be experientially communicated to man, but in order that *any* divine Person inhabit the soul. For the wisdom in which God the Son is given connotes love. This wisdom pertains specifically to the cognitional order, yet it exceeds the domain of naked knowledge and includes a certain vital, quasi-ecstatic motion to become immersed in the beauty that is God's truth. Short of this it could not really manifest God the Son, could not proportionately communicate to the soul the living Word; for the Word that is God is not a cold, abstract word of mere knowledge. He is, in St. Thomas' phrase, "the Word not of any sort whatsoever, but the Word as breathing forth love."

Wisdom's motion to embrace and to most intimately penetrate its divine object of contemplation is a mode induced by love's activity. For it is proper to love to reach outward to realities as they are in themselves, and not merely as they are presented—perhaps only partially—in knowledge. For example, when a man looks at a picture of his family, what he sees is only a picture; not the family but a symbol. But the love that arises in him is love of the members of his family themselves. Love is stirred by

the symbol, but directed to the reality itself. So by faith we attain to divinely true knowledge of God, but only through a symbol. But love seeks and rests in God immediately.

Even in this life love attains and embraces God directly. This is why St. Paul wrote that charity never falls away, because the identically same virtue of love which a man has on earth endures, quite unaltered, in heaven. Even in heaven man's will cannot possess the reality of God more truly or more really than charity possesses God in this life. Because faith is a mediate, imperfect union it shall pass away; charity shall go on in us, please God, forever.

On earth therefore it is more especially love which achieves the special presence of God to just men. Faith opens the mind's eye to the supernatural truth that God is at the depths of the soul. Faith gives supernatural awareness of God's closeness. But it is love which underlies the experience of God, love that touches and, so to say, tastes the presence of the divine guest.

Then begins a process of growth in God that is the most glorious, the most noble growth that man can ever know. Love has felt God Himself, it has thrilled at the experience of divinity. So, as love grows stronger, it cries out for ever more perfect knowledge of God to keep pace with love's development. Faith can only grope through symbols which are not God but human ideas, human judgments.

Gently God activates within the soul a special gift of the Holy Spirit called *wisdom.* By this gift's activity the soul begins to know God in a new way, a way that is in some respects closer to the beatific vision than it is to faith. The soul begins to know, to feel God, not now in merely human and obscure symbols, but in a way that is vigorous, enrapturing, in a way that is the most thoroughly gratifying experience of love man can ever know

on this earth. In this most simple, but quasi-ecstatic, awareness of the Trinity within the self is found the highest achievement of human living. In this state the human person has divinely succeeded. He has found himself because he knows the God from whom he came forth. Only in God can man ever really come to know and love man himself. For man is in his depths the image of God. Only in knowing God can man come to understand that basic God-relationship that he—man—is.

The Meaning of the Indwelling

And now, briefly, I should like to point out something of the practical meaning of the doctrine of the divine indwelling.

First, the opportunity to live in closest and most satisfying union with God is given to every one of us. God dwells not just in the soul of a few chosen persons of extraordinary spiritual destiny. God dwells in the soul of every human person who is in the state of grace. And it is God's desire that by His indwelling men generally shall reach great sanctity. His purpose in coming to us is our advancement, our perfection as men, the images of God.

On His part God gives each one of us everything necessary to live this life of conscious, intimate union with Him.

Himself He gives always. Strength and light to know and experience His presence He gives through faith, ennobled by wisdom. The urgent, driving impulse toward Him He gives through—and in—charity. If then a Christian finds that his thoughts and love, his inner life of awareness and deep affection is but little or seldom concerned with God, the failure involved is in no sense due to God's lack of generous gifts. If a Christian finds that an intensely personal and conscious cleaving to God is for him a rare experience, let him know that the most adult and most glorious achievement possible in his life is escap-

ing him. His most rewarding capacities lie unused. Within me, God waits; within me, God has prepared everything. But one thing more is necessary. I must will to fulfill my divine vocation as the living, conscious, dedicated temple of God. Only in the use of the gifts that God has given me can I ever come to know the splendor of what I am.

Lastly, I should like to add, very simply, that no Christian man can ever be really a happy, thoroughly mature person except on condition of his consciously and persistently striving to deepen in himself the possession of God that is already his. This I say not lightly, but most earnestly.

No person—divine or angelic or human—is ever completed, ever really happy, alone. No personal nature—divine or created—finds itself except by giving of the self to other persons. The very notion of person means capacity for self-donation in wisdom and in love. Only in giving *myself* can *I* ever be fulfilled. There are many reasons why this is true, reasons extraneous to our purpose here. But let me say this much: One of the most remarkable discoveries, or rediscoveries, of contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists—men who are often enough completely without religious faith—is that the human person can attain maturity, serenity, security, can attain his own perfect development, not really in external accomplishment, not in impressive achievements, but only in thoughtful love of the other. In the language of contemporary experts, the person does not begin to emerge except in its conscious efforts at thoughtful adjustment to other persons, and the person does not develop save in the development of generous love. Even in divinity, even in the Godhead, divine Persons are constituted as distinct Persons by nothing other than divine relationship to each other, by divine self-donation in wisdom and in love. And this is the teaching of all Catholic theologians from earliest days unto this day. To be a person, then, means to be capable of giving the self to the other in knowledge and in love. To be a perfect,

an adult person is to be mature in understanding love. And this is the reason why the Lord said, "This is the first and the greatest commandment: *Thou shalt love.*"

As persons, then, we can never really be ourselves except by losing ourselves in love of others. But because we are Christian persons our human capacities have been truly and interiorly altered by grace, and faith, and love. They have been so positively directed Godward that nothing short of consciously seeking our God can ever bring us the inner serenity everyone of us longs for. The law of our being as persons is that we must love; as *Christian* persons that we must love God. Unless we do give our minds and hearts to the God who is within us, then the urgent need which grace produces in us—the need to give the self to God—would be unfulfilled. In our most basic need we should be starved. In whatever ways we succeed, and to whatever measure we succeed, we cannot succeed as Christians, we cannot attain our real maturity, except to the degree that we are trying, consciously and lovingly, to live with the God in whom alone we can be fulfilled.

There is no achievement like the achievement of loving God. There can be no joy like to the joy of possessing God. Of this all other joys and all other achievements are but reminders and symbols, beckoning us inward to the God of all joy.

NOTES

1 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 43, a. 3. Here, as in the Scripture citation below, italics have been added by the author of this article for emphasis.

2 The divine indwelling is very often attributed to the Holy Spirit, for the reason that the indwelling is a divine activity looking to man's sanctification, and having divine love as its source. Works having love as their divine source and sanctity as their term, are attributed to Him because within the Trinity He is the spirit of love, therefore called the *Holy*, the *Sanctifier*. But the divine will and the divine power which actually accomplish human sanctification are the one divine will, power, and activity of the three Persons.

3 Letter to the Ephesians, IX; *PG,* 5, 742.

4 *Patrologia orientalis* XII, n. 42.

5 *Adversus Eunomium,* 9, 22.

6 *De Spiritu Sancto,* n. 25.

7 *Thesaurus,* assertia 35.

8 Epistle 187.

9 *Compendium theologiae,* chap. 130. The truth that creaturely activity also demands a special causation need not concern us here.

10 Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa theol.,* IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 1.

11 *Ibid.,* q. 23, a. 1.

12 The inexhaustible, and to us unutterable truth of God is perfectly, and adequately expressed in only one simple Word, the Word who is God, the second Person of the divine Trinity. Any, and all created words about God are infinitely inadequate to express the full truth about Him. What the words of the Creed, or any other formula of faith express is truth and divine truth —but not its infinite fullness and simplicity.

13 This question has been answered in quite different ways by diverse theologians and theological schools over the centuries. Because the Church has never dogmatically defined any one answer the solution is open to free discussion among theologians. The answer summarized in these pages, that of St. Thomas and the Thomistic school, is regarded by theologians generally as the most satisfactory and complete solution. In addition it seems to have this very considerable advantage that it synthesizes into a coherent totality all that is most convincing in other proposed solutions.

14 It will be noted that both created wisdom as symbolic (and even communicative) of the divine Word, and created love as symbolic (and even communicative) of the divine Spirit are not sense-perceptible symbols. Nevertheless they really are symbols in their function of representing the Persons of the Trinity. Their activity is supernaturally *perceptible* to their subject; and they do awesomely *represent* the divine Persons precisely in their distinctness. Hence they are signs since a sign is that which, itself perceived, represents something other than itself.

15 A few more recent theologians teach that an adequate account of the indwelling of the divine Persons demands that the medium through which each is experienced (for example, created wisdom as manifestive of the Word of wisdom) must be proper to that Person alone, not only by reason of being like to Him (formal causality) but also in the sense that it is effectively produced by Him alone (proper efficient causality). Theologians generally reject this doctrine which is admittedly without authority among the great doctors.

The position that the divine Person symbolized in a created

medium must also be the unique efficient cause of that medium need not be true and is inherently defective.

That it need not be true seems illustrated in the analogy we have been using. When a man outwardly manifests his friendship *for* another the act of manifesting is not produced immediately, or properly by his love, as by its true efficient cause. The outer manifestation is caused by an inner decision to manifest, and this decision is quite distinct from the actual love. A sign of this is that we can love without manifestation; its proof that the two acts—love, and the decision to manifest love—have quite different objects. The object of friendship is my friend, his welfare; the object of the decision to show friendship is my action manifesting friendship. Similarly the one God, infusing created wisdom and love into a man, wills the commensuration of wisdom to the Word, and of love and to the Spirit—but such commensuration, or formal similarity by no means demands principality as to efficient causality, somewhat as the fact that a warm greeting symbolizes friendship does not imply that that greeting is efficiently produced by the friendship.

Moreover the position is inherently defective. Efficient causality is defined in terms of action, so that efficient causes are distinguished from one another as agent from agent. If distinct divine Persons have distinct actions, productive of different terms, then those Persons must be distinct agents. Distinct agents act by distinct powers and natures. Thus there would be at least three infinite powers (ultimately three Gods); whereas the Creed says *"non tres omnipotentes sed unus omnipotens."*